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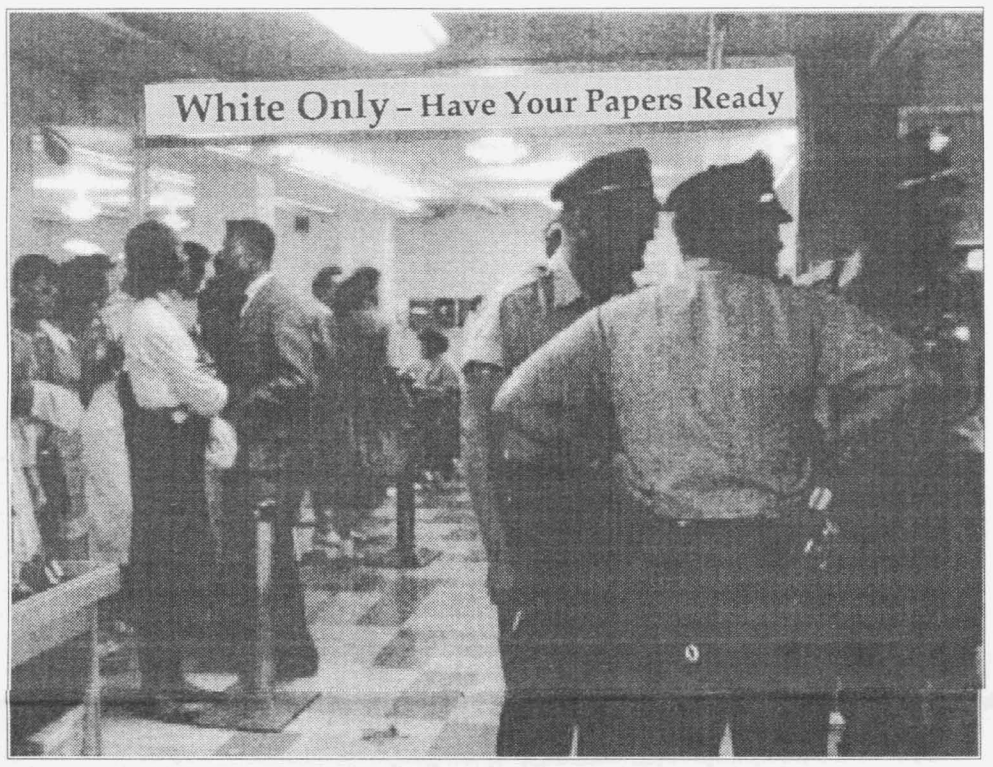
WORKS IN PROGRESS

VOLUME 5, NO. 9 THURSTON COUNTY RAINBOW COALITION JANUARY 1995 ■ FREE

"Racism is so universal in the country, so widespread and deep-seated, that it is invisible because it is so normal." Shirley Chisholm

California's Proposition 187

Institutionalizing Racism



Pat Tassoni

On December 14th, Tim Marshall, Immigrant Rights Movement of San Francisco spoke on the Resistance Campaign Against Proposition 187 in California. Tim, a student at San Francisco State toured the Northwest to educate people about the passage of Proposition 187 and the coalition he is working with to resist implementation. This presentation was sponsored by Puget Sound Solidarity.

Proposition 187 was passed by the voters of California in the 1994 General Election and requires not only deportation of undocumented workers, but also requires teachers, social workers, and other non-law enforcement officials to demand identification from "people suspected of being illegal immigrants," and to report findings to the authorities.

Among the implications of Proposition 187:

- *Children suspected of being illegal must prove their citizenship or their teacher must report them to Immigration!*
- *All state-funded services (except emergency medical) are prohibited for undocumented workers, and the providers of those services are required to demand identification and proof of citizenship as well.*
- *Teachers and other officials are vulnerable to prosecution if they fail to get identification or report findings to the authorities.*

-Puget Sound Solidarity flyer

Proposition 187, called *Save Our State,* was originally funded by the Pioneer Fund, a 1930s white supremacist group that continues to compare the "races" through pseudo-scientific research of their craniums and such a la *The Bell Curve.* Since then many corporations signed on to help finance 187. The passage of 187 is a victory for the far right, who have played off the racist fears of California citizens to pass off the responsibilities of their economic woes. Undocumented immigrants and latinos in general are scapegoated as being the cause and continuing problem for California's failing economy. But this is hardly the case.

Economically, California's tax structure was frozen in 1979 with Proposition 13, meaning corporations and property owners pay taxes on the assessed value of their property in 1979. This of course means less funds now, resulting in shrinking state services and the loss and inadequate maintainence of schools, parks, and libraries. As California's depression and unemployment continues to increase due to military and other layoffs, racist rhetoric paints the situation as "Our jobs, not their's."

As a part of America, California's history is full of racism: colonization; statehood; the 1880s anti-Chinese railroad labor laws and marriage restrictions; the anti-latino environment of the 1930s and 40s; World War II Japanese concentration camps, etc. Proposition 187 is the most recent ploy meant to exacerbate race relations, following "english only" laws which racists use to paint the situation as "Our culture, not their's."

Teachers and other officials are vulnerable to prosecution if they fail to get identification or report findings to the authorities.

-Puget Sound Solidarity flyer

Response Strategies

Proposition 187 gathered its support outside the multi-ethnic, multicultural, metropolitan cities like Los Angeles. Signatures were gathered from rural, isolated communities (just like the Christian Supremacist groups here in the Pacific Northwest gathering support for their anti-gay initiatives.) The people who were to be directly affected by 187 never saw it till it appeared on the ballot. Without time to spare various strategies were enacted.

A group called Taxpayers United centered themselves around the problem from a fiscal perspective, saying 187 was the wrong solution to immigration problems. They feared the loss of federal funds for schools. They didn't voice any moral reason for opposing 187.

California United comprised of teachers unions, healthcare unions, social services unions, etc. opposed 187 with the slogan "No one is illegal!" Their opposition was moral and economic.

Immigrant Rights Movement educates latinos (documented or not) of their rights as citizens and helps them mobilize themselves against such attacks.

Demonstrations were held including one in October which drew 120,000 protesters into the streets of L.A., whose majority population is latino. (L.A. is the scene of a rebellion a few short years ago.) High school students took some initiative, seeing their present and future in jeopardy, and organized demonstrations with significant cries like "We didn't cross the border, it crossed us!"

Forward Strategies

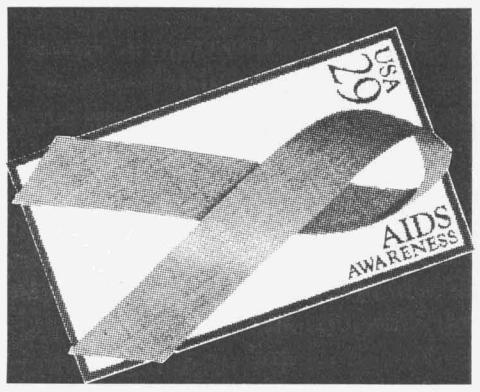
It is important to note that only 35 percent of the population voted, meaning only 20 percent actively favored 187. 55 percent of all eligible latino voters turned out, the largest segment of the population by percentage. Varied sources report that 75 percent of latinos voted against 187, about 50 percent of blacks and asians voted against 187, and 33 percent of whites voted against 187. These numbers seem to indicate that the latinos recognized themselves as the targets of 187, which they are, and that blacks and asians understood this as well to a degree. Perhaps coalition building across communities of color could help dispel the economic myths of 187 and make the racism much more pronounced.

The facts of latinos (documented or not) indicate that they do not hurt the economy, but quite the opposite keep it going by filling in the low wage sector. Many latinos work for minimal and sub-minimal wages in agricultural and production industries. They do not want to interact with government agencies for fear of being found out or harassed. It is estimated that after paying taxes, each latino worker will contribute $20,000 more than they get back from the system. Demographics show explicitly that the order of groups on welfare is whites first, then blacks, and then latinos.

Proposition 187 is a racist attempt to deny latinos education, pre-natal care, recourse to law, etc. even when they are born in the U.S. By law all state employees, police, teachers, etc. would be required to turn people in on suspicion, to suspect those who are different. It would empower the racists in all walks of life: to deny selling a latino an apple-pie without documentation of citizen status; to firing a latino for being one of "them"; to ignore accusations of rape if the victim is latino; to basically declare and have open sea-

(Continued on page 9)

Letters



Olympia Movement for Justice and Peace

Meets the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of every month

Wednesday, Jan 11th

7pm @ TESC LIB 2218

OMJP business: Work on GATT presentation, Michael Albert, structure, meet new facilitators

Wednesday, Jan 25th 7pm
Olympia Timberland Library
OMJP business &
8pm Meeting on building
Oly's Political Cultural Center

11 Resolution for 1995 and Beyond

In the aftermath of the elections, Pacifica News reported that about 39% of the electorate participated in the elections which "sent a sweeping message to Washington." And the *New York Times* reports that nationwide, the vote for congressional races split 50-50 between the two dominant parties. That means about 20% of all potential voters endorsed the Contract On America: spend more on weapons, starve the poor, build more prisons, enrich the rich, and eliminate all obstacles to the transformation of living ecosystems into profits for multi-nationals and garbage for the rest of us.

So I've been wondering what the other four-fifths of us might plan to do if we want to raise our families in reasonable health and happiness and continue to inhabit this battered but still-attractive planet. In hope of inspiring visible resistance to the official version of what happened in these elections, here are my post-election resolutions. If your own most important issue or favorite strategy is missing, all I can say is, GO FOR IT.

1. Use my freedom of speech to advocate for justice, peace, and planetary survival: write letters to the editor, post broadsides, perform poems of protest, give speeches, write manifestos, publish rebellious and imaginative stories, and give press conferences.

2. Give more money and time to an issue or candidate that matters to me personally.

3. If the Democratic party won't adopt a progressive agenda, help create an alternative party that will.

4. Advocate decriminalization of marijuana and release of all non-violent drug offenders from the penal system. Vocally protest the use of drug laws to erode civil liberties. Assert the right of all adults to alter their own nervous system using any substances they deem appropriate.

5. Use my power as a consumer to support small and local producers: farmers, craftspeople, Olympia bookstores, family-owned garden suppliers. Keep my dollars in my community and don't give away my power to save twenty-four cents.

6. Work to radically restructure and reduce the military budget to support peace-keeping instead of war-making.

7. Sing the praises of forests, rivers, wetlands, deserts, mountains, prairie restoration, and the Clean Water Act. Work on behalf of salmon, herons, spotted owls, wolves, and all strange, beautiful, and endangered plants.

8. Support Native American sovereignty, cultural, political and spiritual rights, and freedom for Leonard Peltier.

9. Oppose the nuclear industry. Oppose nuclear testing. Oppose nuclear power.

10. Support the full range of women's reproductive freedoms: access to birth control, abortion, home birth and desired medical support, the right to breastfeed, and freedom from medical harassment.

11. And finally: go to more parties, turn up the music louder, and dance!

Margot Boyer

Works In Progress

Mission Statement: This organization is dedicated to promoting mutual understanding among diverse cultural groups and providing a voice for peoples disenfranchised by the dominant culture. We encourage the presentation of material by those most affected by exclusionary and unfair practices. Our aim is to explore the meanings of injustice and democratic participation in our society and in relation to the emerging global transition.

Anti-Discrimination Clause: We will collectively endeavor to be sensitive and respectful to all those oppressed in this society, and their issues. However, if and when we should make a mistake in this regard, we expect to acknowledge it and to express regret for injury or insult given.

The following statement will become part of the Editorial Policy and will be the governing tool for the Anti-Discrimination Clause: *WIP will make every effort to work with the contributor of material considered by WIP to be offensive in order to reach a mutually agreed upon resolution, but WIP reserves the right as a last resort to edit or not print submitted material.*

WORKERS IN PROGRESS

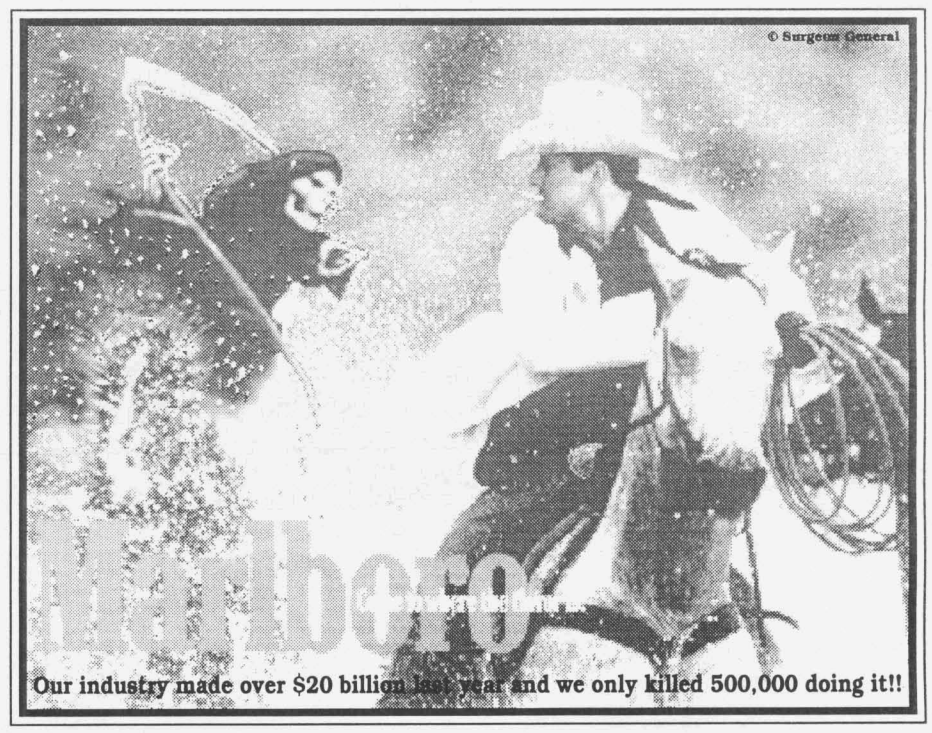
Jerome Johnson **Evelyn Montague**
Zachary D. Lyons **Teresa Jennings**
Pat Tassoni **Chris Russo**
Greg Hohnholt **Sylvia Smith**
Marie Smith **Dave Zink**
Dave Campbell

Works In Progress is a community newspaper sponsored by the Thurston County Rainbow Coalition. Opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the Rainbow Coalition or the Workers In Progress and are solely those of the authors.

Keep those letters and cards coming. Correspondence and articles are always welcome. If possible submit articles on disk (Wordperfect). WIP reserves the right to publish in whole or part all submissions; so for editing purposes please enclose your phone number. Send submissions to Works In Progress, PO Box 295, Olympia, WA 98507.

Portland Grocery Strike Update

Over 7,000 grocery store workers belonging to Portland/Vancouver United Food and Commercial Workers and the Teamsters were on strike in the Metro area from Aug.18 to Nov. 12th. The stores involved included Safeway,Thriftway and primariarily Fred Meyers which is owned by Kohlberg,Kravis and Roberts out of New York City. The workers didn't get everything they had sought but did win many of the original goals. For more information on the strike see *WIP* (Oct 94).



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Send to: Works In Progress, PO Box 295, Olympia, WA 98507

WIP Schedule

WIP article submission deadline is:

Wednesday, Jan. 18

Also on that day, there will be a meeting at SPEECH (218 Fourth Ave) at 7 pm. Call 705-2726 for info.

Proofreading Meeting

Tuesday, Jan. 24 at 7pm
Downtown Timberland Lib

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Dave Campbell at 352-6132

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EMERGENCY HABITAT'S LETTER TO THE HOMELESS WITHOUT SHELTER

The following letter was posted at Bread and Roses on December 19th. Many of the homeless men sleeping out in the cold, wet weather have been anxiously awaiting any news of a shelter opening up. The men I have talked to are angry and impatient, and don't understand the necessity for all the bureaucratic wrangling that has gone on for over two years on this issue. Here's what I wrote to them:

To the Bread and Roses community:

Gary Miller requested that I create a newsletter to keep you informed of Emergency Habitat's progress with getting a shelter established. I've summarized our progress and the problems we are presently still facing below. If you have other questions not answered by what I've written here, please call the above number and leave a message. We'll get back to you with an answer ASAP.

The good news

In the six weeks that Emergency Habitat has been an organization, we've been successful at getting some vital community support for our shelter proposal. This is a significant change in perception because in the past two years, nearly every policymaker in Olympia preferred to keep asking for more evidence that additional shelter was genuinely needed, rather than confront the problem directly.

One of the studies that the Housing Task Force (HTF) did over the past summer concluded that a "crisis respite shelter" was needed, primarily for single men that were not being served by the overflow shelter set up for women and families by Associated Ministries. There were eight other parts to the recommendation included in this study, and over the fall, the HTF began the process of deciding which local organizations would see that each of the nine parts were implemented. I'm pleased to report that HTF has recognized Emergency Habitat as the organization that will provide the shelter described in its report.

What's the big deal, you ask? Well, the HTF support will make it easier for us to acquire the $15,000 - $20,000 in grant monies we will need to run the shelter through April 30. In addition, this support helped us to get a tax exemption sponsorship from another organization called Catholic Community Services, which has supported several shelters in Seattle. It also has greatly improved our chances to get our funding proposal approved by Community, Trade, and Economic Development ($5,000). (We'll know whether we will be awarded this funding by the end of this week.)

Not-so-good news

On the down side, we still don't have a site. In our experience, finding a building to use for a shelter in Olympia is like pulling teeth, because the perception among most folks is that shelters breed crime, violence, and loss of business to merchants nearby.

To show how false these perceptions are, we've created a video with the help of a local filmmaker named Carol Burns that shows how little impact the type of shelter we want to start really has on a community. It shows how a resident-managed shelter in Seattle shares space with a union hall without much fuss or trouble of any kind. So we're still hopeful that some of the site prospects that we are working on now will pull through when the video is shown (it's now being shown on TCTV this week) and when our funding is together.

In the meantime, we're still looking for buildings. If you have any ideas about possible shelter sites, please call us at 705-8712, and we'll check them out.

The bottom line

The bottom line to all this is that it is very unlikely that we will have a shelter up and running until mid to late January at the earliest. I wish I could tell you otherwise, but that's the way the situation stands. Until then, you will have to depend on the services available to you, and whatever you can invent for yourselves. Most importantly, you will likely have to depend on each other for day-to-day encouragement and survival assistance. I don't like it any more than you do, but that's the truth.

I hope this information has been helpful. Good luck to you all.

Respectfully, Greg Hohnholt

The bottom line to all this is that it is very unlikely that we will have a shelter up and running until mid to late January at the earliest.

SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE INVESTING

Take stock in the youth of our community.

Volunteer as a Shelter Parent for local Runaway & Homeless Youth

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We will all profit or pay
for whatever they become."
James Baldwin

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AN HONEST LOOK AT BOSNIA

Tom Barnard

As I write this article, people in Sarejevo are dodging snipers bullets to line up in soup kitchens. As I write this article, people in Bihac are huddled in basements as bombs fall on their neighborhoods, reducing them to rubble. As I write this article, multi-ethnic villages throughout Bosnia are being "cleansed" of Muslims, evicted from their homes and stripped of their possessions.

Why? What force has been unleashed in the world that makes genocide a reality in Europe, fifty years after the "leaders of the free world" said `Never Again'?

A cursory journey through the media will provide the following explanations from the usual official spokesmen of Europe and the U.S.; from Warren Christopher to "Sir" General Michael Rose. "It's a civil war, a war of ethnic group against ethnic group. All parties are equally guilty. The only answer is for them to slaughter each other until they realize the futility of it all. Any attempt to arm the Bosnians will only escalate the war. What everyone needs is peace. We can only work towards persuading all parties to negotiate. Any attempt to restrain the Serbians will only in flame them." It is all said in polite, oh-so-civilized tones, by impeccably dressed men (of course) in suits, using the language of moderation, of reason, of diplomacy. And it's all absolute bullshit. Not to mention a rationalization for genocide.

A WAR OF AGGRESSION

The truth is that this is a war of aggression waged by a section of Bosnian and Croatian ultra-nationalist Serbs, militarily and logistically backed by the ultra-nationalist Serbian government in Belgrade. Since 1992, under the leadership of Radovan Karadzic, this has resulted in the occupation of 70% of Bosnia, most of it "ethnically cleansed". 200,000 people have been killed, the vast majority civilians. 30-60,000 women have been raped and 2 million refugees have been created. Even in the areas still under Bosnian control, even in the so-called "safe" areas, sniper fire, shells, missiles, mortar fire, napalm and cluster bombs have continued to rain down upon the civilian population.

Opposed to this barbaric aggression is a multi-ethnic government representing a multi-ethnic people: the Bosnians. The Bosnians, (those that are left!) have a pluralistic society of three distinct cultures; Bosnian, Serb, and Croatian. These cultures are commonly intermingled; for example, 40% of marriages in Sarajevo are ethnically mixed. The Bosnian government stands for a continuation of this pluralist society, with democratic rights accorded to all. This includes even minority groupings, such as Bosnian Jews. Despite the brutal attacks from ultra-nationalist Serbs, they have not retreated into Muslim fundamentalism, as some press commentators report. Serbs and Bosnians serve side-by-side in the Bosnian Army.

This stand is rooted in the pre-war reality of Bosnia. While many rural villages were predominantly one or another culture, they were geographically close to villages of other cultures. One could not travel for more than a few miles in any part of Bosnia without coming across other ethnic groups. This pattern has been established by successive invasions from stronger powers in the region, such as the Ottoman Turks, and the Austro-Hungarian empire, as well as the normal course of migration.

It is precisely because of this that the Serbian nationalists have developed their policy of "ethnic cleansing". There was no way to establish a purely Serbian territorial presence without the violent expulsion, massacres and rapes of Bosnian civilians. This is a policy of "creating facts on the ground" with a vengeance.

The truth is that this is a war of aggression waged by a section of Bosnian and Croatian ultra-nationalist Serbs, militarily and logistically backed by the ultra-nationalist Serbian government in Belgrade.

GAINING HEGEMONY AMONG THE SERBS

Nonetheless we should not confuse the Serbian nationalists with the Serbian people as a whole, or assume that all Serbians have been overtaken by some medieval idiocy. Serbian nationalist politicians have relied on a number of pre-existing political, economic and cultural tendencies to cement an alliance of business elites, artistic and political intellectuals, as well as workers and peasants. Some of the main factors include: 1) an unabated economic crisis since the late 70's, a function of Yugoslavia's inability to find a niche in an increasingly globalized economy. 2) a heritage of distrust rooted in political divisions of WW2, where some Yugoslavs fought alongside Hitler, some against, and some just each other. 3) Outrageous and overwhelming Serbian media propaganda, trading not only on traditional ethnic symbols but inventing lies of Bosnian atrocities from whole cloth. (One of the favorite tactics is to videotape victims of Serbian atrocities against Bosnians, and then just switch the names of the participants.) 4) The tempting of Serbian soldiers of the JNA with the promise of war pillaging by an organized campaign of looting in areas taken from Bosnians. Thus tales of armored vehicles returning from the front loaded down with everything from refrigerators to VCRs, as a policy of pillage seeks to replace the malfunctioning of an economy mired in crisis. And it is a policy which the U.N. and NATO have acquiesced to and even aided.

BUILDING A NEW WORLD ORDER

Viewed through the simple lens of "peacekeeping", the role of the U.N. and NATO may be a little hard to understand. After all, there's no peace being kept; the military role of the U.N./NATO forces has been completely useless in preventing Serbian nationalist aggression. In fact, it has rewarded Serbian gains de facto, by hamstringing any Bosnian attempts at defending themselves through a thoroughly one sided arms embargo, while freezing Serbian gains in mythical truce lines. This, of course, has freed up the Serbs to fight elsewhere; it is this policy advantage which the Croatian Serbs have used with a vengeance to assist their Bosnian Serb "brothers."

Nor have the "safe havens" been defended; with the failure to protect the Bihac area, the undeclared tilt towards the Serbian position has come out into the open. With no plans for further air strikes, not even the pinpricks that the U.N. had been using in the past, the Bosnian civilian population is left at the mercy of a well-supported army armed to the teeth and whipped into a frenzy.

Meanwhile, the "Contact Group", the international body of first-world countries responsible for negotiating an end to the war, is also rewarding Serb aggression. After the latest assault on Bihac, group members such as Britain and France, let it be known that the previous outrageous offer to split the territory of Bosnia into 70% for the Serbs and 30% for the Bosnians is now up for grabs. That paragon of peace, "Sir"

(Continued next page)

"In every truth, the beneficiaries of a system cannot by expected to destroy it."

— Asa Phillip Randolph

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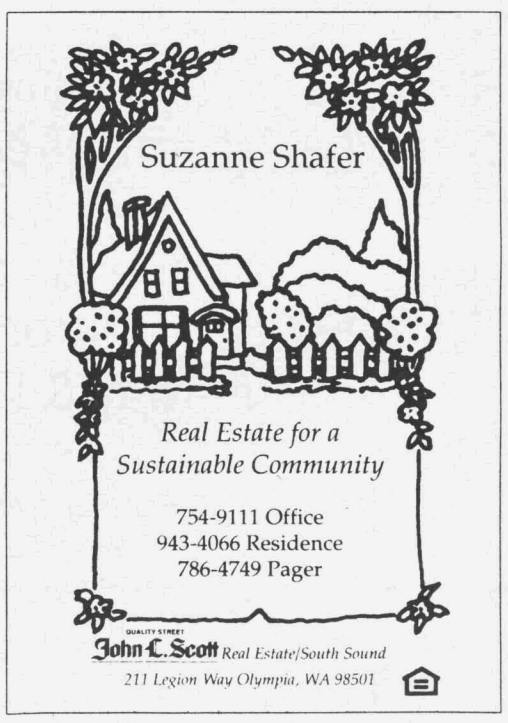

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(Bosnia, continued)

General Michael Rose, commander of U.N. forces, openly asks why should the Serbs accept only 70%, when they've won so much on the battlefield? Such is the mentality of a man who, charged with the protection of Bosnian civilians, has developed a "close working relationship" with the chief Serbian general in charge of the military offensive. Never mind the morality, Rose says, look at the military advantage.

Yet the policy which has been pursued is not the result of a few corrupt leaders' callous decisions. Rather it is rooted in a post-cold war world, where the international hegemony of the "winners", Western Europe and the U.S., is paramount. Russia, now safely "capitalized", under Yeltsin, will be brought in to the family, as a sort of sickly younger brother. This new world order is bound up with the watchwords "international cooperation", "regional stability", "economic prosperity." You say you find this lacking in what used to be known as Yugoslavia? Well, no matter, the international community can wait, and will wait, right down to the last Bosnian. Wait for what, you ask? Very simply: for an internationally recognized and brokered settlement. If that leaves the Serbs with the majority of the land, resources and power, so be it. As long as there is some sort of regime, no matter how odious, that is recognized as legitimate through the U.N., everything else can be negotiated. How much, if any national sovereignty the Bosnians are left to is nothing to them; the issue is how to get all the parties to the conference table. If one of them has to be carried in as a corpse, and forced to sign an agreement with rigor-mortised hand, so be it. The important point to remember is that the Bosnians, (or anyone else for that matter) never be allowed to settle their own disputes, on their own terms.

The U.S. lately has been showing some signs of embarrassment. Clinton has pulled U.S. forces out of enforcing the arms embargo. That meant literally, the removal of three ships patrolling the waters off of Bosnia, a symbolic step, changing nothing. The Republican "dynamic duo" of Dole and Gingrich have been making noises about bombing Serb positions. But what really brought to light the agreement between the U.S. and Europe is the cave-in around the issue of Bihac. For all it's brave noises, Warren Christopher has taken grave pains to assure the allies that the U.S. is not about to seriously challenge the dominant strategy regarding Bosnia. In fact, when France floated the idea of a precipitous pull-out of all troops, no doubt leading to a slaughter, the U.S. was quick to volunteer to help escort them out. Their reaction of the prospect of Jimmy Carter going to Sarejevo and Pale is quite revealing as well. For although they certainly do not mind Carter going there, (maybe he can persuade those pesky Bosnians to surrender!) there was one issue they made absolutely clear. Carter is to negotiate on the basis of the existing plan of the Contact Group; he is not to offer any other plan. The Bosnians can get the peace-of-the-dead plan from the Serbs via the U.N., or from Carter, but the plan is the plan. This presents quite a contrast to the saber-rattling around Iraq, or North Korea. There, a massive show of force is the order of the day. But in Bosnia, the U.S. has no interests in opposing Serbia just for the sake of democracy. The U.S. does not view a free, democratic, multi-ethnic Bosnia as part of a new world order. And a "limited" war, ending with a Serb victory is.

SUPPORT FOR A MULTI-ETHNIC STATE

The progressive Left, worried about the ramifications U.S. military involvement, has remained uncharacteristically silent while one of the most unprecedented human rights nightmares of the 20th century. In addition, the media racist attempt to portray the conflict as a case of "ancient ethnic blood feuds" has led to a great deal of confusion among ordinary democratic-minded people in the U.S. It is time for this to stop. The media's fog should be penetrated. U.S. and European aiding and abetting of genocide should be exposed and opposed. The Left should take primary responsibility for educating their constituencies and others about the crimes committed in the name of narrow nationalism. The Bosnians' desperate situation deserves our attention, and the Bosnians our support. ◆

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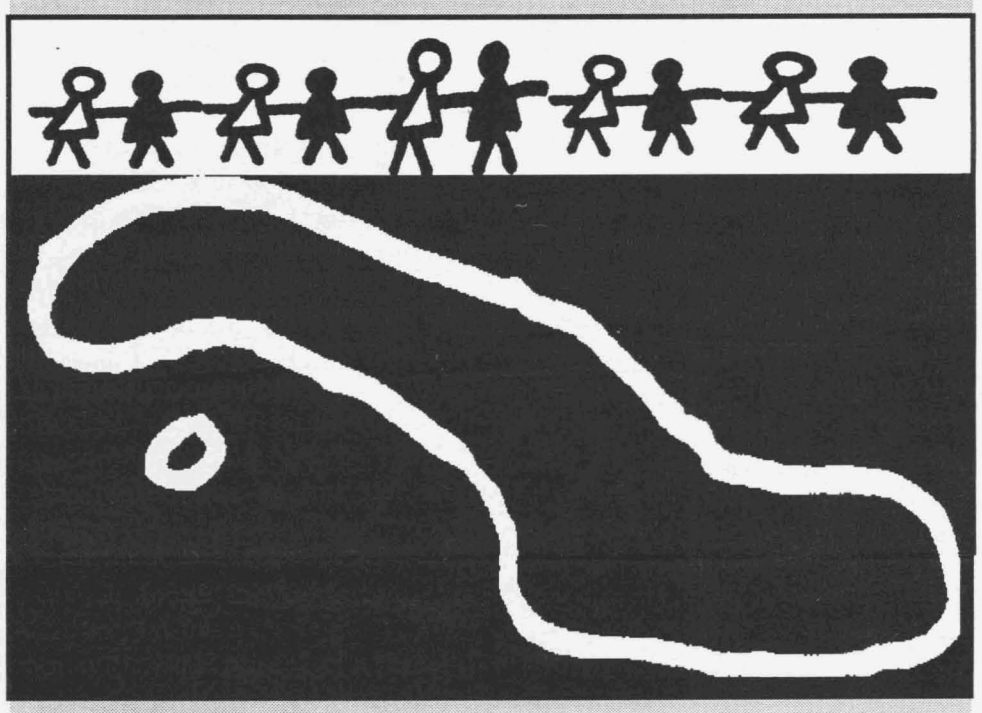
Cuba Youth Brigade

Kim Sherman
and Chuck Domitrovich

On January 7th, as members of a group of young people from the United States, Canada and Europe, we will embark on an educational brigade to Cuba. Starting in Havana, we will visit schools, factories, hospitals and an AIDS hospice our first week. The second week will be spent working on an agricultural collective in rural Cuba.

The focus of the brigade is to meet and work with young Cubans, to find out about life in Cuba for young people, and to see how Cuba is approaching the many problems it faces as it tries to maintain its sovereignty against continuing threats and interference from the United States.



Although restrictions are placed on Americans wishing to travel to Cuba, this brigade is not intended as a direct challenge to those restrictions. Rather, the brigade is an opportunity for us to experience Cuba first-hand, to learn from that experience, and to share that experience with others. In this way, we hope to gain an objective understanding of the situation facing Cuba today.

When we first began making preparations for the brigade, we realized how little most people knew about Cuba. In many ways, we found ourselves equally lacking in knowledge, and the prospect of the brigade raised a number of questions for us.

For instance, is Fidel Castro really the tyrannical dictator that government officials and media sources in the United States portray him to be? The fact that Cuba under Castro has seen a phenomenal rise in its literacy rate, and has instituted rent control and agrarian reform measures to the benefit of most Cubans suggests otherwise.

This summer, the US press gave extensive coverage to the thousands of Cubans attempting to leave the island on rafts. But while these people were leaving Cuba, 500,000 Cubans rallied in support of the revolution—an event largely ignored by these same news agencies. Obviously there is a much wider range of opinion in Cuba than we are led to believe. How then, do most Cubans feel about the revolution and the Castro government, and to what extent is dissatisfaction in Cuba a result of the hardships directly imposed by the US embargo?

These are the kinds of questions that we feel are necessary to a clear and objective understanding of the situation in Cuba. However, these questions cannot be answered by the mainstream media's methodology of uncritically quoting US government sources. Unfortunately (and probably not accidentally), the restrictions on travelling to Cuba insure that most US citizens are not given access to an open and insightful debate. It is a sad but telling testimony that what little debate now exists is limited to whether the Cuban revolution should be starved out of power by strengthening the 30 year old embargo, or whether the embargo should be lifted, and the Cubans beaten by the power of the dollar. As of late Newt Gingrich has further 'broadened' this discussion—to the right—by once again raising the specter of invasion.

While a two week brigade to Cuba probably won't answer all of these questions, it will supply a new source of information, adding new voices to the debate in this country and perhaps providing some opposition to current government/media misinformation.

Kim Sherman and Chuck Domitrovich have been activists in the Seattle area for a number of years. They will return from Cuba on January 21st, and will be submitting articles describing their experiences on the Cuba Youth Brigade. ◆

Community-Based Support Groups

Supporting People Living With

Boycott Quarterly

Groups like the AIDS Coalition To Unleash Power (ACT-UP) have attracted considerable media attention over the last decade in their quest to increase awareness about AIDS and support for people living with AIDS. Meanwhile, other AIDS groups have quietly provided daily support services for people living with AIDS, helping to improve their quality of life.

When the AIDS crisis was first addressed over a decade ago, activists—mostly gay and lesbian— began to initiate AIDS support projects. Sometimes they ran these projects out of an existing gay organization in the community. Other times a number of individuals mobilized to form a group based solely around HIV/AIDS issues. These first AIDS groups were usually run by volunteers with minimal budgets, since there were few established organizations, public or private, that would contribute funding to groups focusing on HIV/AIDS.

Today, there are thousands of different groups across the continent working on a variety of AIDS projects. They include groups that work specifically with legal issues for people living with AIDS (PLWA's), groups promoting 'safer sex' education, organizations addressing violence against PLWA's, practical home support services projects, needle exchange programs, etc. And while at one time AIDS organizations primarily served white, middle-class, gay men in urban areas, today's groups are run by and for sex workers, teens, women, communities of color, rural communities, IV drug users, etc.

Stand Up Harlem and the Aliveness Project are examples of AIDS support projects that are based around the philosophy of consumer control, where people living with HIV/AIDS have a say in the services that they need, and how they should be provided .

Practical support service groups address the daily needs of people living with AIDS at home. This can be anything from housecleaning, to child care, to transportation, to meal preparation and delivery. The goal is to help ensure that people living with AIDS are able to remain at home as long as possible, with dignity. Some practical support service groups operate with volunteers visiting a person's home on a scheduled basis, while other groups link a PLWA with one specific "buddy." And in communities where homelessness and poverty are prevalent, some groups have created cooperative housing for PLWA's, where the support services are taken care of by volunteers or are shared among house members, either formally or informally.

Although the practical services themselves may seem mundane, they are vital. As it becomes increasingly difficult for a PLWA to take care of household and personal needs by themselves, it is crucial that someone can be there for them, so that the person living with AIDS can focus on the rest of their needs. For example, child care can make the difference between whether a mother who is HIV-positive is able to go to receive medical treatment, and it eliminates her being forced to choose between taking care of herself or taking care of her child. Receiving transportation to appointments, or having meals delivered, not only helps a PLWA to continue taking care of their health needs, but also allows them to continue spending time doing whatever else they want to be doing in their life.

It is important that a group's structure, and programs, reflect its community's own particular needs and concerns. New York City's Stand Up Harlem is a self-help community that coordinates HIV/AIDS services with drug addiction services, and whose members are "formerly homeless, HIV infected and affected, recovering drug addicts and ex-cons, and residents of Harlem." Stand Up Harlem emerged after founding member and current director Louis Jones attended a memorial service for a friend who had died of AIDS. After the memorial, Jones began Stand Up Harlem with some other HIV-positive residents of a local shelter as a communal living environment based on self-empowerment, peer education and the mutual interdependence of all of its members.

HIV-positive and formerly homeless, Jones has also been through drug treatment programs and the prison system. He started Stand Up Harlem as an alternative to traditional social service institutions, where he believes individuals are not in control of their services and are made to feel as if they don't know as much as the professionals do—about what types of services they might need. Stand Up Harlem is dedicated to addressing the multiple needs of its community members, with respect for each individual.

Founding member Willie Reyes believes that his group is sustainable because, "PLWA's are helping other PLWA's, with the support of professionals. Members work with an incredible vigilance, because we are doing it for ourselves, and helping the next one to do it, too."

Stand Up Harlem's principles include: communal living and mutual support; shared leadership and responsibility as a way of empowering the individual and preventing dependence on the social service system; remaining small and community controlled; and housing as a human right, no matter where an individual falls on the continuum of drug abstinence and dependency.

Members of Stand Up Harlem reside in a three-story brownstone. Members alternate cooking meals, which are eaten communally. Food for the meals comes in part from local supermarkets, who have donated their excess food to the group. Within the building, members have access to several support groups (including a Narcotics Anonymous meeting for people living with HIV/AIDS, a meeting for lesbians, and a meeting for gay men of color), holistic medical alternatives like acupuncture, and various workshops.

Stand Up Harlem is an active member of the community, sponsoring block parties and community youth activities during the summer. It strives to end the stigma and isolation that its members have traditionally encountered from the wider community, and it is in fact receiving much support from its community.

In Minneapolis, Minnesota, the "Aliveness Project" has formed its own kind of a community. All members of the group, about 475, are HIV-positive/PLWA's. The members determine their needs, and set the agendas, while the staff and volunteers who participate in the operation of the organization are there to help facilitate the needs of the members. The group which serves between 500-600 people, provides such home services as delivered meals, wheelchair loans and house cleaning. And lunch is served daily in the drop-in center free to members, two dollars for everyone else.

The meals served are prepared to be as healthy as possible, and are made with as much organic foods as are available. The Project gets food from the local co-op, as well as from organic growers in the area, at a much reduced rate, or in some cases for free. The Aliveness Project sustains itself financially by fundraisers in the community (including everything from elaborate dinners to carwashes initiated by teenagers), individual donations, and the lunch at the drop-in center. Because it is truly a community organization, other community groups and individuals have helped the project get through the crunch in times of financial crisis.

Stand Up Harlem and the Aliveness Project are examples of AIDS support projects that are based around the philosophy of consumer control, where people living with HIV/AIDS have a say in the ser-

th AIDS

vices that they need, and how they should be provided. They challenge the idea that an individual is either "independent" or "dependent." And they actually strengthen a community by promoting the ideals of empowerment, and the interdependence of all people. This is inspired by the Independent Living Movement of disability rights activists, who are working to dismantle the present nursing home system, and who want to replace it with attendant services—a more consumer run, and community-based, concept. The Independent Living Movement maintains that all people have the right to have control over their lives, including people with disabilities and people living with HIV/AIDS. Consumer run groups like Stand Up Harlem and the Aliveness Project differ from most groups, which are large and are operated like charities. Charity organizations do provide services to a specific group of people. But inherent in this kind of an organization is the dichotomy between "helper" and "needy."

Many times groups working on HIV/AIDS issues feel as if they are constantly stuck in the midst of a financial crisis. Groups that seek large funding sources like federal grants for most, or all, of their needs are growing more common. Many AIDS groups have transformed from grass-roots community organizations into virtual corporate charities because they have chosen to obtain the majority of their funding from non-community sources. *The Advocate* reports that several large, well established AIDS organizations around the country have recently been accused of mismanagement and misspending. The groups implicated are all agencies that have evolved over a number of years into huge institutions, with million dollar budgets, and with much of their funding coming from state, federal, and corporate grants. Although these types of organizations are not inherently unmanageable, without community participation, they can easily lose their community base and support.

Although it is reasonable to expect that the government will financially support AIDS organizations, community groups who rely heavily on government funding are always at risk of drastic budget cuts. For example, in British Columbia, a coalition of approximately forty community-based AIDS organizations are targeting the provincial government because it severely reduced funding for community-based groups in its 1994 allocations. In particular, groups serving traditionally marginalized communities will be affected. The Positive Women's Network; ATISH, an HIV/AIDS project that serves South Asian and Iranian communities; Black AIDS Network; Asian Support AIDS project; Grupo Vida, which serves Latin American communities; and Vancouver Native Health, will all be forced to reduce and possibly terminate several of their services.

The coalition of BC AIDS organizations is calling for a boycott of the 1996 International AIDS conference scheduled to be held in Vancouver, to challenge the government's recent funding decisions, and to call attention to its overall negligence in addressing HIV/AIDS.

Today, Chicken Soup Brigade has two thrift stores in Seattle, each operating seven days a week, about ten hours a day. There are a few full time staff people operating the stores, with the majority of the work done by volunteers.

Groups may become overwhelmed and immobilized when confronted with the task of obtaining resources and funding from inside their community to be able to sustain their work. It can be helpful to get support from respected, established members of the community. For example, in Portland, Maine, a handful of gay men with HIV and AIDS began meeting at a local church in 1985 as a sort of self-help support group. When Frannie Peabody, a well-known community leader whose grandson, Peter, had died of AIDS a few years earlier, heard about their group, she joined. Because of her respect within the community, she was able to network easily, and help get the AIDS Project that exists today off the ground. (At 91, she is still facilitating a support group there.)

More often than not, however, a group will need to reflect on each of its members' individual connections within the community—it is essential to network with existing community, political, and religious organizations, as well as with local businesses and individuals. As Paul Draper, from Portland's AIDS Project says, "You have to believe in what you're doing. And then start talking to people."

Still, resources can be obtained in unorthodox ways, if people think a bit creatively. Seattle's Chicken Soup Brigade began in 1983 by volunteers of the Seattle Gay Clinic in response to an outbreak of hepatitis in the community. Later, it changed its focus to serving people with AIDS, by providing home support services. As the group began accumulating large amounts of clothing from its clients who had died, they realized that they could sell the cloth ing instead of giving it away. They began to store them, and they held quarterly rummage sales, raising money for the organization. And in 1989, they opened a thrift store.

Today, Chicken Soup Brigade has two thrift stores in Seattle, each operating seven days a week, about ten hours a day. There are a few full time staff people operating the stores, with the majority of the work done by volunteers. The clothing itself still comes from Chicken Soup Brigade members, who specifically ask to have their clothing donated to the store when they die, as well as community members who donate old clothing. The income from the thrift stores support about one-quarter of Chicken Soup Brigade's total budget. The rest of their money comes from fund-raisers, such as a recent large dance-a-thon, and other special events, like the monthly Gay Bingo. They also depend on individual donations, which come primarily from within the communities in which the group operates.

Chicken Soup Brigade's thrift stores function positively in a number of ways. On a practical level, they are a source of money for the agency to sustain its work providing home support services. But the stores are also an outreach and education tool—when people walk into the store to buy clothing, they automatically have access to, and receive, exposure to information about HIV/AIDS. And the thrift stores serve as another link to the community itself, by providing inexpensive clothing to low-income people in the area. The thrift stores of Chicken Soup Brigade have served as a model for other communities. In Portland, Oregon, for example, a similar thrift store will open this summer, with all of the proceeds going to local AIDS projects focusing on practical support services. The organizers of the thrift store plan for the store to also serve as a center for queer youth, and for community meetings and social gatherings.

Communities seeking to initiate AIDS projects have many different types of models from which to gather ideas. A specific strategy that works well in one community may not necessarily be successful in another. People living with HIV/AIDS and the community need to participate fully in the design of any AIDS support project, not only to ensure that its structure and funding are effective and sustainable, but to ensure that the work is strengthening the community itself.

For more information:

Stand Up Harlem
145 West 130th Street
New York, NY 10027
(212) 926-4072

Aliveness Project
730 East 38th Street
Minneapolis, MN 55407
(612) 822-7946

Chicken Soup Brigade
1002 East Seneca
Seattle, WA 98122- 4214
(206) 328- 8979

BC Persons With AIDS Society
1107 Seymore Street
Vancouver, BC V6B 5S8
(604) 893-2250

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COMPLAINING? WHO, ME?

Greg Hohnholt

You know, I've been writing for *Works in Progress* for over two years now, and as most writers do, I tend to wonder what, if any, effect my words have on readers. Being somewhat cynical and overly self-critical, I have a tendency to believe that most times, what I do doesn't amount to much in the way of changing people's minds about whatever it is I'm writing about. What I *want* to believe is another story; however, and whatever rosy, egocentric pictures my imagination invents tend to get top billing.

I used to feel guilty about this tendency, but then I decided that it goes a long way towards keeping me behind the computer every month. In short, I gave myself the luxury of the benefit of the doubt. Yeah, I'll never win any editors' awards, I thought, but what the hell; *I* think it's worth doing, so I'll do it.

But something happened recently that upset this delicately balanced psychic apple cart. I happened to be cashiering at the Westside Food Co-op, and an Evergreen faculty member came through my line. I had worked as a writing tutor on one of his programs, and we knew each other, so I said hello.

"Hi, how 're you doing, Greg?" he responded.

Not wanting to get into a conversation, I replied mechanically, "Oh, can't complain."

"Oh really? That's surprising, you're always complaining in *Works in Progress* ," he said with a conspiratorial smirk.

Now, listen. I'm not going to try and defend my past stuff to you all; I just want to let you know that if you have been wanting to say something similar to me after reading one of my articles, I can assure you that this person's comment had a sobering effect on me. I guess I *have* been complaining about the fact that most people in Olympia appear to agree with its policymakers that letting homeless people sleep in the streets is an acceptable position to take. I'm guilty.

[I]t's no wonder that a venal form of disrespect is thick, rampant; indefatigable even. And in my opinion, it's gonna get worse as everyone struggles mightily to hold on to their little slice of economic security in the months ahead.

In fairness to this faculty person, I don't think he was kvetching to me about the content of my articless, however. He was, I think, just suggesting that I would be a more effective advocate for the homeless (or simply a better writer) if I was a tad more balanced in my coverage of the homeless scene.

So in order to get myself into the groove of being more balanced, to be more positive, and to win friends and influence Bob Jacobs, I am going to make a New Year's resolution: I hereby promise to write one thank you letter a month to someone or some organization (preferably local) that I feel has demonstrated a nonpartisan, communitarian spirit; a spirit of providing some cumulative benefit to the commonweal. God knows there's not enough sincere grateful appreciation being bandied about in the politics of everyday life; it's no wonder that a venal form of disrespect is thick, rampant; indefatigable even. And in my opinion, it's gonna get worse as everyone struggles mightily to hold on to their little slice of economic security in the months ahead.

Think I'm getting sappy? Well, play along with me on this for a second. Imagine if you, yes, *you* there reading this paper, received a thank you letter for something you had done. And you, being the sort of selfless individual you are, naturally didn't even suspect that what you had contributed was important, or significant; you just did it for the hell of it, or for kicks, or because it got you out of your self-imposed rut, or whatever.

Now, what would you do? How do you think you would react to reading that letter? (Emphasis on letter, signing a dumb card isn't enough.)

You'd probably want to do more, wouldn't you? Sure you would. And even if you didn't, you'd at least feel pretty good about doing whatever it is you did. And you'd likely spread that good feeling around in some other way; maybe complimenting someone, or believing in yourself enough to slay a bigger dragon.

[Jesus, I'm starting to sound like those two goofs who write all those sickening primer philosophy books; you know, *Life 101* and *You Can't Afford the Luxury of a Negative Thought* . No matter, this is *my* personal dragon to slay, folks. You understand.]

So, as an act of good faith in this venture, let me initiate this resolution with a *mea culpa* : I'm not going to be so arrogant as to expect that you should think like I do anymore. While it's true that providing shelter for homeless people is an important issue, it's not the *only* issue. Writing in this paper doesn't give me the license to judge you for putting your energies into other issues, so I'll lay off of the tone of wounded moral outrage for awhile.

Phew, what a relief. You feel better, I feel better. OK. ◆

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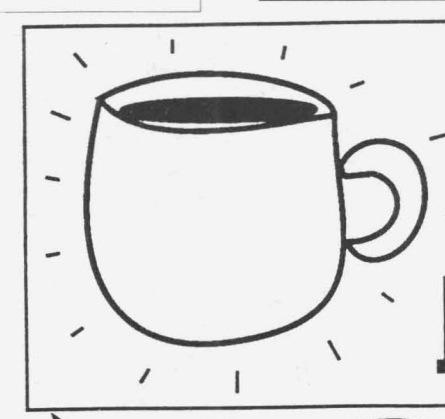
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Sandy Nelson Hearing Re-scheduled

Dave Zink

16 December 1994

This morning at 9:00, ACLU attorneys brought a motion for summary judgement on the *Tacoma News Tribune* ("*TNT*") vs. Sandy Nelson case before Pierce County Superior Court Judge Vicki Hogan. The motion asserted that a trial is not necessary since the *TNT* has admitted that it banished Sandy Nelson from her reporting job because of her off-duty activism for a civil rights initiative. Nelson's attorneys argued that the *TNT*'s action clearly violates the state constitution and a 1992 campaign reform law that prohibits employers from discriminating or harassing employees on the basis of their political activities.

Judge Hogan's response was that she had not had the time to properly review all prior legal decisions related to this issue. Addressing an overflow crowd of 60 spectators, she stated: "This is an important case. Would you consider postponing for a couple weeks?" The hearing was then re-scheduled for Tuesday, 3 Jan 1995 at 10:00. At that time, attorneys will be given more time to make oral arguments.

Nelson's attorneys argued that the* TNT's *action clearly violates the state constitution and a 1992 campaign reform law that prohibits employers from discriminating or harassing employees on the basis of their political activities.

Why be concerned about this case?

The *TNT* argues that the content of the paper is affected by its employee's political activities - even though they cannot cite any examples of bias in Nelson's reporting. On the contrary, Nelson has won several awards for her fair and high-quality journalism from groups across the political spectrum.

1. The decision will have far-reaching repercussions relating to what activities employees may take part in on their own, off-duty time. If the *TNT* prevails, will this strengthen employers who want to limit their employee's activities to those the boss deems "appropriate"? Employees could soon feel pressure to curtail involvement in any activities which run counter to their employer's preferences!

photo by Martin Munguia

Journalist Sandy Nelson

2. A *TNT* victory in this case would basically nullify a section of 1992 State Initiative 134, which states that private employers cannot discriminate against employees based on their involvement in political initiatives, committees, etc. The purpose of this section of the initiative was to protect employees from the intimidating and coercive power of employers. It would also contradict the **Alderwood Mall decision**, which stated that:

a. A citizen has the right to gather signatures for initiatives on private property (including shopping malls), and

b. An *employee* has rights to engage in initiative campaigns on her own off-duty time.

Due to the anticipated turnout, the January 3rd hearing will be held in a larger courtroom (#2A) at the Pierce County-City Building, 930 Tacoma Ave. South, Tacoma.

For more information, phone (206) 627-5267 or 756-9971. ◆

(Prop. 187, continued)

son on those who are different.

Proposition 187 is to take effect with the new year, but it will be tied up in the courts as its constitutionality is determined. One of the strategies for opposition is to start a non-compliance pledge campaign, where individuals and groups sign a pledge refusing to comply with 187's implementation. There is a big role that unions can play in organizing, in pledging, and in funding voter registration drives.

Another traditional source of organizational skill could come from the Democrats, but that is unlikely seeing how they were conspicuously absent in opposing 187. They have not for years represented moral or economic opposition to this kind of hate. (In fact, it was the Republicans who came out against it, calling it racism!)

For those of us outside California, possible boycotts will be called on the companies that helped fund Proposition 187. The companies already enjoy the benefits of California's frozen tax structure and the fruits of minimal and sub-minimal wage laborers. Possibly a boycott of the state of California will be called, encouraging everyone there to think again about institutionalizing racism and discrimination. (Boycotts of Arizona and Colorado have already worked!)

What is really needed is a broad based progressive movement to undermine racism and respect the benefits that come from multiculturalism. As always remember to educate and agitate, here and everywhere.

A similar proposition of law could be proposed in the State of Washington next by the same radical right forces that played on people's fears about the economy to whip up racist hysteria. We need to organize now to prevent this madness in our state.

For more information call Linda at 357-7272 or Greg at 754-7102. ◆

MICHAEL ALBERT Speaks On

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The Dismal State of U.S. Society
Ideas on liberation and organizing participatory democracy

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"The message [that "We Can Win"] is what distinguishes Michael Albert's work over the past 30 years, a remarkable record of accomplishment, which offers valuable signposts for those who are not satisfied to contemplate a dismal future for much of humanity."
–Noam Chomsky

Michael Albert is a long-time political activist in campus, anti-war, anti-intervention, and community movements. He is co-founder of South End Press and of *Z Magazine*, where he is now co-editor. His newest book is *Stop the Killing Train: Radical Visions for Radical Change* with foreword by Noam Chomsky. Other books co-authored by Michael Albert include: *Looking Forward: Participatory Economics for the 21st Century, Liberating Theory, Marxism and Socialist Theory, Socialism Today and Tomorrow,* and *Unorthodox Marxism.* His writings go well beyond passionate criticism to include explicit vision and strategy for social change movments. In his latest book and others, he does not simply say "No" to the "killing train" but "YES" to justice and liberation, offering detailed glimpses of what society could be like and how to get there.

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Misery Funds A Legal Fiefdom

Nina Bernstein

Memphis, Tennessee – Bronze dogs guard the neo-classical facade of the Shelby County Juvenile Court. Mahogany desks and softly-lit oil paintings grace the administration offices. It is immaculate, from the gleam of the main lobby floor to the glare off the bullet-proof glass that seals the detention section.

Judge Kenneth Turner wouldn't have it any other way, explains Charles Gray, chief probation officer, as he leads a tour of the empire Turner has ruled for 30 years in a place where the power politics of child welfare are stark enough to illuminate blind spots in a national debate about reform.

Behind the locked door of a shelter unit in the detention wing, the tour stumbles on a child. He is a small black boy in drab detention clothes with a look of desolation beyond grief. Asked his age, he holds up eight fingers. Asked his name, he whispers so softly Gray has to bend double to hear him.

Freddy Robinson, Gray's staff reports later, is a foster child with a speech impediment, dyslexia and "periods of outrage." When an ice storm knocked out power to his state-supervised foster home, the foster mother said he had to leave the house and the boy became distraught. So she took him to the nearest police precinct.

"He was crying and screaming – he wanted his brother," police officer Ruth Hawkins recalls. "He wouldn't talk to us. He was out of control." Officers arrested the sobbing eight-year-old for disorderly conduct, she says, and took him as a delinquent to juvenile detention.

Freddy is one of about 500,000 children in this country living apart from their parents, a number that has risen by 63 percent in the last ten years. Despite decades of reform efforts, from class action lawsuits to major federal legislation, the foster care system routinely harms those it is supposed to help. Many foster children live out their childhoods from placement to placement, never returning home or finding any other permanent family.

Among young people who recently aged out of the system, which costs $11 billion a year, a 1991 national study found half were unemployed, 46 percent were high school drop outs, 40 percent were on welfare and a quarter had been homeless for at least one night. Teenage girls leaving foster care were 60 percent more likely to have a baby out of wedlock than their peers, the study found; many of these babies end up in foster care, too.

On paper, Al Gore's home state is in the vanguard of a national movement of "family preservation" to reverse the dramatic growth of foster care. Tennessee's "Home ties," a program of short-term, intensive intervention for families with children at imminent risk of placement, is listed by child advocacy foundations as a national model. The state's ambitious "Children's Plan," launched five years ago by an alliance of fiscal conservatives and advocates for children, ostensibly overhauled the financing and delivery of services to reduce the number of children going into custody.

But the number of children in the custody of the Tennessee Department of Human Services has continued rising – to 9,503 children in August, up from 7,707 in January 1993. The publicized reform efforts also seem marginal to the harsh political and economic forces that rule these children's lives.

Here, as in the nation, children at risk of foster care mainly are the children of the poor. During most of American history... with no public relief, parents too poor to support their children had to put them into orphanages or up for indenture or adoption.

Here, as in the nation, children at risk of foster care mainly are the children of the poor. During most of American history, the relationship between poverty and family breakup was unambiguous: with no public relief, parents too poor to support their children had to put them into orphanages or up for indenture or adoption. Indeed, modern day welfare—Aid to Families with Dependent Children—had its origins in a movement to keep children of destitute widows out of state orphan asylums. Federal foster care funding still puts what a top Washington staffer calls "a bounty on poor children," because local foster care costs are matched only for children from AFDC-eligible families.

Yet, except for the call by right-wing commentator Charles Murray to open orphanages, the national debate about welfare reform has been largely silent on the fate of children whose parents pass a proposed two-year limit on benefits and remain jobless. The "family preservation movement," the latest crusade in the long struggle to make America's child welfare laws live up to their benevolence, also is silent about the link between rising foster care caseloads and two decades of deepening income inequality.

"When Americans talk about poverty, some things remain unsaid," writes Michale B. Katz, a social welfare historian who de-directs the Urban Studies program at the University of Pennsylvania. "Mainstream discourse about poverty, whether liberal or conservative, largely stays silent about politics, power, and equality. But poverty, after all, is about distribution.

"Descriptions of the demography, behavior, or beliefs of subpopulations cannot explain the patterned inequalities evident in every era of American history. These result from styles of dominance, the way power is exercised, and the politics of distribution."

In Tennessee, the politics of distribution in child welfare are hard to ignore. "We were pretty naive when we started," sighs Nancy Thomas, state coordinator of the Children's Plan. "Conflicts of interest? We discover one a day...the politics are horrible. Sometimes I feel I'm bare-breasted to the world."

One rural juvenile judge here owns a residential treatment center, she noted; his cousin, a legislator, has a financial interest in a hospital that collected children from juvenile court by the vanload, to the tune of $501 per head, per day. Another judge is on the payroll of a for-profit psychiatric hospital that has done a brisk business in court wards in a state that 1989 had the nation's second-highest rate of child psychiatric hospitalization.

And then there is Judge Kenneth Turner. He was years ahead of the curve in cracking down on "deadbeat dads," assigning paternity to out-of-wedlock children, and privatizing public services—all elements of the welfare reform proposals under discussion in the Clinton administration. But the results might give advocates pause.

Turner has used child support enforcement to build a personal empire of patronage and political clout from a juvenile court where critics say poor people have few rights and poverty is often punished by jail. Meanwhile, with state AFDC benefits that are among the lowest in the nation, welfare rolls and out-of-wedlock births have continued to soar.

A former vice squad captain who earned a night-school law degree, Turner was never admitted to the bar, so he appoints six referees to hear all cases under a system he devised 19 years ago to circumvent a ruling that juvenile judges had to be lawyers. One referee, Curtis Person, is also a state legislator, head of the Tennessee Senate's Judiciary Committee and the top power broker in the Republican part. With state money and legislative blessing, Turner commits juveniles not to state reformatories, but to private institutions he himself lobbied to establish. They are owned by Corrections Corporation of America, a profit-making company whose early stockholders included top state officials of both parties.

The director of juvenile court services is Turner's son-in-law Jerry Mannis; the clerk of court, Bob Martin, was Turner's appointee until a lawsuit forced him to run for election, when he won with Turner's political endorsement.

"Judge Turner has his own prosecutors, his own defense counsel, his own bailiffs," observes Walter Evans, a civil rights attorney recently appointed a city judge by the Memphis mayor. "Their boss is Turner. A lot of people who work at Juvenile court are relatives and friends of County Commissioners. The juvenile court's tentacles are spread so wide, no one wants to rock the boat."

Many on the staff of 320 are paid out of the five percent administrative charge kept from the court's collection of $41 million-a-year in child support — a business that now dwarfs more traditional juvenile court activities. Collection methods have long made Turner the chief prosecutor, judge and jailer of legally unrepresented men who have fallen behind in support payments, often because of unemployment or adversity in a city where black joblessness is triple the white rate and the gap between black and white household income is the steepest in the nation. "

A man who won't support his family is the lowest from of human life," asserts Turner, who knows his flagship issue appeals to poor black mothers and white conservatives alike. "We do have a reputation for strict enforcement. I don't respond to criticism; the record speaks for itself. If I'm wrong, they can appeal it."

In fact, protracted appeals have repeatedly found Turner's practices wrong. But, helped by this clout and deferential press coverage, his critics contend, Turner has side-stepped any substantial change. Martin, Turner's clerk of court for 21 years, doesn't disagree. The rulings "have had no profound impact, " he says. "There's more than one way to skin a cat."

To avoid the due process requirements and time limits required by one court ruling, for example, Turner's referees stopped issuing criminal warrants for non-paying parents; instead they issue "attachments pro corpus," civil orders more commonly used to repossess a car or piece of furniture than to arrest a human being. More than 2,000 people went to county jail on such attachments or other support-related orders from juvenile court last year.

"We have not evolved that far from the plantation state," observes Wayne Chastain, a form Memphis Area Legal Services lawyer who has been winning largely empty victories against Turner's procedures for 16 years and has a lawsuit pending now in federal court. "Prior to the Civil War, slaves were considered chattel and they could be attached; there men can be seized as though they were slave."

Though most cases involve men, Chastain's first three concerned absent mothers. Juanita Martin had left her children in her mother's care while she took government-sponsored training in Mississippi to become a licensed practical nurse. She

The Remembered

The tears have fallen and dried.
The emptiness is here,
Deep in the bottom of my soul.
It stings like salt in a wound,
That will heal only in time.
The warmth is gone,
And a hole remains.
I have lost a part of me.
Part of my innocence.
Part of my freedom.
A part that can never be replaced,
only remembered.

Marvin

was summoned to juvenile court and threatened with jail if she didn't sign an agreement to pay $25 a month in child support to offset the AFDC benefits the grandmother received for the children. When she fell into arrears, she was jailed twice in nine months while trying to finish her training. "The grandmother would have to go down with the AFDC money to get the daughter out," Chastain recalls. "It became sort of a joke."

Another mother, Denise Crump, was summoned to juvenile court from the mental hospital where she had been admitted as a condition of keeping her two children out of foster care. She, too was threatened with jail if she didn't make payments through juvenile court to offset the AFDC they received at their grandmother's.

In a later case, a father with low earnings but a good payment history fell into arrears when he change jobs and his new employer failed to honor a wage assignment. The father, Freddie Servier, was summoned to court, judged guilty of civil contempt—without being given a right to counsel—and sentenced to jail indefinitely unless he made a $200 purge payment, court records show. Unable to pay, he spent sixteen days in jail before a referee ordered his release, and his new employer discharged him for absenteeism.

In 1984, a US Court of Appeals ruled Sevier had been entitled to a lawyer and found that prosecutorial actions by Turner and other judicial officers, if proven, would expose them to liability for damages. Sevier settled for $5,000 Six years later, Criminal Court Judge Joseph E. Brown heard petitions form 22 men jailed by juvenile court and concluded that despite cosmetic changes, the system was as fundamentally unfair as ever.

"Twenty-seven years is long enough for somebody to get their act together down there," Brown fumed from the bench when Turner stonewalled his hearings on the matter. "In the United States of America, a citizen. . . is not supposed to have the same man charge him, arrest him and try him—or the agents of the same man. That's un-American."

For that remark and others, Brown was slapped with a formal reprimand from the state judiciary review board last year for "willful misconduct"—making derogatory comments about a colleague from the bench. He's appealing.

Brown says parents arrested because of child support debts are pressed by bailiffs to sign a form waiving counsel before they even see a referee. In February alone, a third of the 733 parents who appeared were found guilty of contempt. court officials say about half of these came up with a "purge payment" of $200 to $500 to buy time; the rest—about 115 men—went to jail, where their support arrearage grew along with a new debt for jail and court costs. Such men are generally released within a week or two—but only until the next summons, when it all begins anew. "

It's a travesty masquerading as a court," charges Brown, an African-American nationally known for innovative sentencing. "But people are afraid of him. People say, "Turner's a powerful man—he'll ruin you.' Nobody ought to be so entrenched that they can operate above the law."

Turner's stature as a Memphis institution apparently was unshaken by the revelation a few years ago that his entourage made freewheeling use of six $10,000-limit credit cards issued by the county. The bills, paid without question by the County Commission as juvenile court expenses, included thousands of dollars in out-of-state air travel and entertainment at such places as the Hard Rock Cafe in Los Angeles, a Bourbon street bar in New Orleans, and an east Tennessee hunting resort where some of Turner's 350 "auxiliary probation officers" were wined and dines for three days.

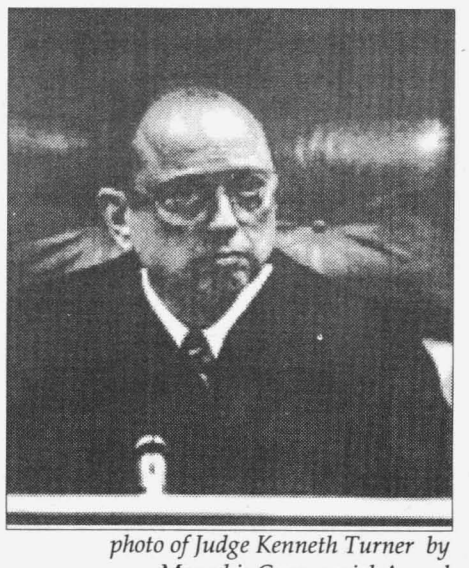


photo of Judge Kenneth Turner by Memphis Commercial Appeal

"We don't review their books in detail," shrugs Walter Lee Bailey, a civil rights veteran and one of four blacks on the 10-member County Commission that approves the court's $18 million budget. "We basically grant them the assumption that they operate within good administrative policy if they don't give us a deficit.

"The Commission is not the policeman of any abuse as long as it isn't flagrant," he adds, pouring himself another glass of wine during an evening interview that has moved from his high-rise law offices to a blue velour-lind mobile home parked below "Hell, I don't know if it's abuse. If I saw a credit card charge at one of the casinos, maybe, but if it's a convention—who am I to criticize?" Turners?"

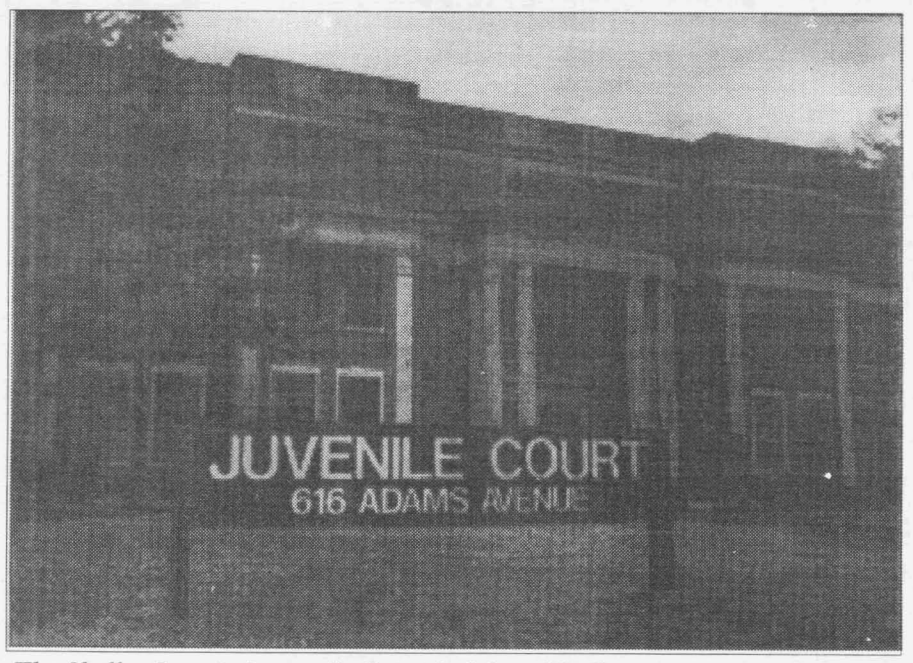
Turner`s volunteer probation officers have included a number of prominent businessmen—and at least one suspected pedophile. "We have investigated some of the people that he was working as auxiliary officers," police sergeant Claudette Boyd of the Memphis sex crimes unit acknowledges, "But it`s like the cases fall off the end of the world."

Two years ago, she says, a teenage boy made a statement to her describing sexual abuse by his volunteer probation officer over an extended period, including sexual molestation during an out of state trip to a long cabin summer retreat. The boy said he decided to come forward when his probation as an "unruly child expired and he realized other children were going into the same man`s care, But Boyd was unable to interview the suspect about the charges. "He got a lawyer and said he wasn`t coming in," she recalls.

Despite her written report to the county attorney general`s office, she said, the case was dropped without further investigation. Robert Carter, the assistant attorney general in charge of child abuse prosecutions, confirmed that the case was never given to the grand jury, but blames insufficient and a lack of resources. He doesn`t know whether the suspect is still an active volunteer, he added, and if he did know, couldn`t tell because of confidentiality.

"Juvenile court sets its own rules, day by day, sex crimes investigator Boyd observes. "That`s just the way it is. Everybody plays by those rules. Since the whole state of Tennessee hasn`t done anything, what`s one person to do?"

Turner`s usually gracious tone turns steely when he is asked about this case. "That`s really muckraking." he protests. "A lot of false, malicious accusations are made.



The Shelby County Jouvenile Court in Memphis dispenses uneven justice to children and their families

Kids have various reasons for making this accusation. "Over the years, he says," precious few" sexual abuse allegations have been made against volunteers and all have been disproven on investigation. Earlier, sitting in his imposing office across from a portrait Abraham Lincoln, Turner laments the passing of "a kinder and gentler time in our community." He dates the breakdown in respect for authority to 1968.

That's the year Martin Luther King came to Memphis, answering the call of striking black sanitation workers whose struggle embodied the new direction King was seeking for the civil rights movement- a Poor People's Campaign that would force America to confront economic inequity.

The Memphis garbage workers had full-time wages so low they qualified for welfare, job conditions cruel enough to scar hem, body and soul: No set quitting time, nowhere but the street o relieve themselves, no place to wash the smell of refuse from their skin, no pay when they were injured on the job. Their walkout finally came after two men were crushed to death in the maw of a garbage compressor. In marches to an intransigent city hall, their signs cried out "I Am A Man."

When leaders of the protests called on school children to join the demonstrations each Monday instead of going to class, Turner threatened to jail the parents of truants. He still blames the demonstrators for "exploiting children and teaching them to disrespect authority."

Bypassing a lobby filled with black families, he takes a security elevator to a private dining room to share stew and warm cornbread with four of his referees, all white men. While Turner smiles approval, they speak of his accomplishments: 94,000 children "legitimated" through paternity actions over 30 years, child support collections 80 times higher than when he started, an annual breakfast for volunteers that draws 1,000 workers who are paid only in "psychic money."

They speak dismissively of lawyers who criticized the court before being fired or leaving town. One they describe as a cocaine addict, another as a deadbeat dad. Turner has been known to depict other adversaries as Communist, homosexual, or dangerous lawbreakers.

The judge is a longtime admirer of J. Edgar Hoover and reputed to have the late FBI director's skill at leveraging other people's secrets. He has been re-elected unopposed since his first race in 1963; his current term runs till 1998. Asked if his thinking has changed in 30 years, he replies, "Not really," then amends his answer. "More parents ought to be jailed for child neglect," he says. "We're taking these kids and raising them and letting the parents go scot-free."

It's a view antithetical to the "family preservation" philosophy of the Children's Plan and Home Ties. "Oh dear, dear, dear, dear, that sounds so harsh, bless his heart," Trudy Weatherford, state coordinator of Home Ties, says when the remark is repeated to her.

Like many officials, Weatherford once worked for Turner. "He truly cares about children," she insists. "On the other hand, he certainly has built himself an empire. He certainly is all-powerful in Shelby County. There are no checks and balances and haven't been for a long time. We pick our battles carefully."

Weatherford says Turner has welcomed Home Ties as a resource. She observes that in some respects a return to "good, old-fashioned social work." And she likens child welfare prescriptions to fashions in clothing. "They come and go," she says with a laugh. "But Judge Turner stays forever."

This article is reprinted with permission from the Alicia Patterson Reporter, *1001 Pennsylvania Ave., Suite 1250, Washington DC 20004. (202) 393-5995. Nina Bernstein, a reporter for* Newsday, *is investigating foster care in America.* ◆

WORKS IN PROGRESS HISTORICAL CALENDAR

★★ JANUARY 1995 ★★

"We must encourage creative dissenters. We must demonstrate, teach, and preach, until the foundations of our nation are shaken." M.L.K., Jr.

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
1 ● 1781- Congress issues additional $191 million in paper currency. By spring, this money will cease to have any value, and the American economy will move close to collapse 1914- New Jersey sets minimum wage for women at $9 a week	**2** 1882- Rockefeller organizes Standard Oil Trust to circumvent laws of the states. It becomes the model for other corporations 1903- Pres. Roosevelt closes post office in Indianola, MS for refusing African-American postmistress	**3** 1825- Scottish mill owner, Robert Owen, buys 20,000 acres to establish utopian community at New Harmony 1910- British miners strike for 8-hour day 1961- The U.S. severes diplomatic relations with Cuba	**4** 1904- U S Supreme Court rules Puerto Ricans are not aliens and can enter the U.S. freely 1933- Iowa farmers threaten to lynch insurance company representatives or law officials instituting foreclosure proceedings	**5** 1846- House of representatives passes a resolution to end the Anglo-American joint occupation of the Oregon country. Rep. Winthrop of Massachusetts refers to "the right of our manifest destiny to spred over this whole continent"	**6** 1773- Massachusetts slaves petition the legislature for freedom 1992- In a wave of department store closings, the Woolworth Corp. announced that it would close, sell, or reformat 900 of its 6500 stores because of the recession	**7** 1795- The corrupt Georgia legislature sells thirty-five million acres in the Yazoo River territory (including most of Alabama and Mississippi) to four land speculation companies for a nominal sum.
8 1914- Michigan: Doctors at natl. Conference on Race Betterment call thin women imperfect, can't understand why they're favored by fashion 1916- Ohio: Militia called to discipline Youngstown strikers; three killed, 19 shot	**9** 1756- Indian Commission, advocates that all future land transfers from Indians to colonists require the approval of the commissioner. This advice reflects their belief that land frauds are the main cause of Indian turmoil	**10** 1903- Argentina bars the importation of American beef because of sanitary reasons 1966- Julian Bond is denied a seat in Georgia State House of Representatives due to his opposition to the Vietnam war	**11** 1836- Abolitionists petition Congress to end slavery in D.C. Calhoun calls abolitionists "foul slander" of the South 1911- London police set fire to Sydney Street home of several Russian anarchists, killing all inhabitants	**12** 1819- Congress fails to endorse a report condemning Andrew Jackson's conduct in the First Seminole War 1910- A Russian Baroness almost starts a diplomatic incident when she asks Pres. Taft for a cigarette at a White House dinner	**13** 1984- Nuclear operating license was withheld from a nearly completed power plant in Illinois,the first time the Nuclear Regulatory Commission had refused to license a nuclear power facility that was close to completion	**14** 1878- Supreme Court rules railroads need not provide equal accomodation to all passengers regardless of race 1913- Annapolis: Turkey trot dancing barred; partners must keep three-inch space between them
15 1771- The North Carolina assembly passes the "Bloody Act" which makes colony rioters guilty of treason 1922- The Irish Free State is established 1929- Martin Luther King, Jr.'s real birthday	**16** ○ M.L.K., Jr Day 1893- U.S. Ambassador Stevens and powerful planters led by Dole, overthrow Queen Liliuokalani's autocratic government in Hawaii. She came to power in 1891 and upset pro-anexationist movement	**17** 1893- Dole sets up a revolutionary committee and occupies government buildings aided by U.S. Marines. Stevens recognizes new regime w/o State Dept. okay and negotiates treaty of annexation with the new government	**18** 1943- End of the seige of Leningrad, which had begun in the autumn of 1941 1969- Vietnam peace talks begin 1973- AT&T agrees to pay $15,000,000 to women and minority employees who had been treated unfairly	**19** 1760- Cherokee Indians unsuccessfully attack Fort Prince George, S. Carolina to rescue Indians held hostage by Gov. Lyttleton to ensure compliance with a peace treaty . Frustrated, they resume raids on settlements	**20** 1637- In Boston sermon, John Wheelwright supports Anne Hutchinson's advocacy of grace over works and of personal revelation that downplays the role of clergy. Wheelwright is convicted of contempt and sedition	**21** 1905- 140,000 Russian workers/peasants begin march to Czar's Winter Palace asking for better working conditions 1974- Supreme Court rules schools must teach English to students for whom it is not a first language
22 1814- In the Creek Indian War, Tennesse militia forces are repulsed at Emuckfaw 1905- "Bloody Sunday": Czar Nicholas II orders troops to fire on unarmed protesters, more than 500 dead	**23** 1964- 24th Amendment abolishing the poll tax is ratified by South Dakota 1968- Navy intelligence ship U.S.S. Pueblo seized off N. Korean coast by N. Korean patrol boats 1977- First episode of Roots televised	**24** 1814- Creek Indian War: Tennessee militia is defeated at Enotachopoco Creek 1842- Haverhill MA citizens submit a petition to Congress requesting peaceful dissolution of the Union 1848- Gold discovered in Sacramento, CA	**25** 1890- Knights of Labor and American Fed. of Labor unite with United Mine Workers to battle "scandalous working conditions in the mines" 1904- Penn.: Explosion entombs 200 miners 1922- Anti-lynching bill killed in Senate	**26** 1907- Congress passes an act forbidding corporations from contributing to election campaigns for national office 1910- London: Police rescue British Prime Minister Asquith from attack by suffragettes	**27** 1814- Creek Indian War: Tennessee militia defeated at Calibee Creek 1992- Macy, one of the nation's largest department stores, filed for bankruptcy, due to $3.5 billion debt from a management-led buyout in 1986	**28** 1712- Tuscarora Indian War: Militias of North and South Carolina, aided by native allies, attack the Tuscarora on the Neuse River. 300 Tuscaroras are killed 1919- 200,000 on strike in Britain, Ireland
29 1834- Workmen on the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal are rioting after their strike for closed shop was met with violence. Pres. Jackson dispatches troops to quell riots. This is the first time Federal troops are used in a labor dispute	**30** 1905- Johann Hoch arrested in NY for murdering 9 wives 1952- Pres. Truman denounces Sen. McCarthy as pathological, untruthful, character assassin who needs no information to accuse 1956- MLK, Jr.'s home bombed	**31** 1867- Congress grants suffrage to all males over 21 in all US territories 1952- Truman denounces Sen. McCarthy as pathological, untruthful, and character assassin who needs no information for his accusations	One isn't necessarily born with courage, but one is born with potential. Without courage, we cannot practice any other virtue with consistency. We can't be kind, true, merciful, generous, or honest. Maya Angelou	**Gate of the new year** This month is named after Janua Coeli, the goddess who looks forward and backward. She is said to be at the gates of birth and death.		**Submissions** If you want to call attention to a future or past event, please send necessary information to WORKS IN PROGRESS, PO Box 295, Olympia WA 98507, Atten: Calendar

DECEMBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
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FEBRUARY

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13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28					

○ full moon ● new moon

★ *America is a great nation but . . .* ★

Martin Luther King, Jr